



Statements and Speeches

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PEACE-KEEPING AND CYPRUS: THE CANADIAN EXPERIENCE

A Speech by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, to the United Nations Seminar at Mount Allison University, Sackville, New Brunswick, on July 4, 1975.

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...As the minister responsible for Canada's external relations, I am deeply interested in the fact that your subject for continuing study is the United Nations. You have -- if I may say so -- chosen well. This unique international institution is essential to our efforts at some kind of rational ordering of affairs among nation states. Whatever its faults, we cannot get along without it; there is no real alternative to this universal diplomatic forum. At the present time the United Nations is going through a period of particular strain; and, as always in a time of crisis, the clouds of critics around it grow more clamorous. In these circumstances, support for the UN is vital. It is a fundamental objective of Canadian foreign policy that the Government continue to provide such support. But, to be effective, this, in turn, must be backed up by an informed and sympathetic public. This seminar contributes in no small way to the creation of that kind of public.

I understand that during this past week one of the two main subjects you have discussed is Cyprus. From the standpoint of both the United Nations and Canada, this inevitably entails peace-keeping.

Last autumn, in speaking to the General Assembly of the United Nations, I singled out peace-keeping as a matter of particular concern to the international community. As I said at the time, "the nuclear threat to our security may be dramatic and awe-inspiring but we cannot neglect the more prosaic but lethal threat from the use of conventional force". For, after all, since the end of the Second World War, no one has lost his life as a result of the use of nuclear weapons but many thousands have been killed in conflicts involving the use of conventional weapons. The fact is that one of the few useful tools that the international community has developed to deal with the problem of conventional conflicts is peace-keeping. There is, alas, little prospect that we are rid of crises in the world giving rise to the use of conventional force and consequently we must strive to improve substantially the means by which these crises can be contained and ultimately resolved.
